United Nations S/PV.3802

Security Council

Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3802nd Meeting

Tuesday, 22 July 1997, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Osvald	(Sweden)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Larraín
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Costa Rica	Mr. Berrocal Soto
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Da Rosa
	Japan	Mr. Konishi
	Kenya	Mr. Rana
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Portugal	Mrs. Gomes
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gorelik
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping: Dag Hammarskjöld Medal

97-85864 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping: Dag Hammarskjöld Medal

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

This meeting of the Security Council is a solemn occasion in recognition of the sacrifice of all those men and women who have lost their life in the service of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Members of the Council have before them document S/1997/569, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I welcome the Secretary-General and give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I welcome this draft resolution. It provides a clear, focused and sympathetic way of honouring fully the memory of those women and men, military and civilian, including United Nations volunteers, who have lost their lives in the service of peace on United Nations peacekeeping operations.

If anything, this recognition of their valour and sacrifice, in the light of the ever greater challenges that peacekeepers face, is overdue.

Since the Blue Helmets were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988, there have been qualitative and quantitative changes in United Nations peacekeeping. In 1988, five United Nations peacekeeping operations were in existence. Four of them related to inter-State wars, while one concerned an intra-State conflict. Over the next four years, 21 new operations were established, eight dealing with inter-State wars and 13 related to intra-State conflicts.

The United Nations peacekeepers were called upon to perform new tasks. They were put in situations where there was no peace to keep. They were confronted by a broader and greater range of risks. They carried out their work with sensitivity and bravery, but their efforts were not always fully acknowledged.

There were setbacks. Some people were quick to criticize. The shrill voices of those who sat in their armchairs and did nothing but complain that the peacekeepers were not doing enough became familiar.

More than 750,000 women and men — military, police and civilians — from 110 countries have taken part in United Nations peacekeeping over the years. The Dag Hammarskjöld Medal will honour the lives of all those — more than 1,500 — who went to distant lands in search of peace and paid the ultimate price while serving under the United Nations flag.

It will remind us of the sense of duty, bravery and sacrifice of those women and men. And it will honour, too, the memory of a Secretary-General who himself lost his life in the cause of peace.

The President: I shall now make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "For nearly half a century, the lives, security and future of countless individuals across the globe have depended on United Nations peacekeeping efforts and on the peacekeepers participating in them.
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> "Today, we express our gratitude to all those who have served the United Nations in the cause of peace. Over 750,000 men and women have served in United Nations peacekeeping operations. More than 1,500 have lost their life; many more have been wounded. This solemn meeting of the Security Council is held in tribute to their service and sacrifice.
>
> "Today, the Council is establishing the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal in recognition and commemoration of those who have lost their life as a result of service in peacekeeping operations under the operational control and authority of the United Nations. The Medal is named after Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of this Organization, who greatly contributed to the development of the concept of peacekeeping operations, whose own commitment to the cause of peacekeeping was unwavering, and who lost his life while on mission to one of the many countries in which the United Nations has tried to build peace.
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> "As we honour those who have died in United Nations peacekeeping operations, we must never

forget our own responsibility as members of the Security Council towards those participating in the operations whose mandates we establish. The Security Council must continue to ensure the proper discharge of its mandates and take every possible measure to enhance the safety and security of all those serving the United Nations in conflict situations. This we owe those men and women who are prepared to risk their lives for peace.

"Dag Hammarskjöld once wrote that

'no life was more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country — or humanity. This service required a sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions.'

"His life and death are perhaps a fitting symbol of what we honour today: commitment, service and sacrifice."

In accordance with the understanding reached in prior consultations among members of the Council, it is my understanding that the Council is ready to adopt the draft resolution (S/1997/569) before it without a vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The draft resolution has been adopted without a vote as resolution 1121 (1997).

I now invite all present to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have lost their life while serving in peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the United Nations.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.